



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546

DDI-1406-67

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

14 MAY 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary of State  
Secretary of Defense  
Director of Central Intelligence Agency  
Administrator, ACDA

REFERENCE: Memo from U. Alexis Johnson, dated 1 May 1969,

25X1

Attached is a paper summarizing a possible new Administration initiative in the field of strategic arms limitations. If you agree that this approach may have substantive worth, I suggest that it be considered by the NSSM 28 Steering Committee in addition to the three approaches suggested in the referenced memorandum. NASA would be glad to assist in developing this proposal in more detail if this appears appropriate.

T. O. Paine  
Administrator

Attachment  
Paper - A Possible  
Initiative in Strategic  
Arms Limitation.

25X1

25X1

25X1

COPY of [redacted] [redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~

This document consists of [redacted] pages  
No. 3 of 5 Copies, Series A  
#3 Series 'C'

## A Possible Initiative in Strategic Arms Limitation

25X1

A major problem in developing a basis for strategic arms limitations arrangements with the USSR is that of a credible means for verification. As of today, emphasis is being placed upon the formula, "reliance upon national means of verification," referring specifically to the present US reconnaissance satellite program.

If the intelligence collection activities of the US are to be protected from public revelation, an alternative to this formula would appear to recommend itself: bilateral negotiations on verification means to include the development and utilization of an open satellite system designed for the single purpose of verifying US and USSR adherence to treaty conditions.

Such a proposal, if made, would not require the disclosure by either the US or the USSR of the existence, scope, utility, or sophistication of the present overhead reconnaissance programs of both nations. The concern over international confrontation on this issue could thereby be minimized, while both parties could rightly claim to be acting in the spirit of using space for peaceful purposes.

Such a proposal, if accepted, would not interfere with covert intelligence—gathering activities and might provide an important bulwark to their unimpeded continuation. In this case, the quality of intelligence each was able to obtain from overhead reconnaissance

25X1

25X1

**TOP SECRET**

This document consists of 5 pages  
No. 4 of 5 Copies, Series 11

**TOP SECRET**

-2-

25X1

would remain a function of technical progress and evaluative capabilities. Further, the existence of an overt system would provide a reasonable basis for the possible challenges that might become necessary in the event treaty violations were discerned through any covert means.

An overt system that could be bilaterally implemented must be technically feasible, should be based on technologies there is reason to believe neither party would consider highly sensitive, and would have to have a lead time commensurate with the time-frame of the arms limitation agreement desired. Assuming that satellite imagery would be the most useful class of treaty verification data, the key factors become those of appropriate ground resolution, flexibility of target coverage, and parity of data availability to both parties. Image quality must be sufficiently good to offer a basis for public interpretation of the conditions felt or known to exist yet should not reveal actual or projected covert system capabilities. Target coverage is necessarily a determination made by each party concerning the other; polar orbiting satellites with long life and command response should be sufficient to afford photographic access to any part of the world. Parity of data could be achieved through a number of means: APT readout along the lines of current meteorological satellites, jointly manned and operated data acquisition centers, at independent but essentially identical systems each under national control.

25X1

**TOP SECRET**

TOP SECRET

25X1

-3-

As a political initiative, this approach appears both realistic and useful; it would offer new principles for negotiation without compromising the unacknowledged activities of either party, it would underline the US commitment to peaceful uses of outer space, and it would appear publicly credible as a verification means both at home and abroad. While there would have to be more work done to delimit the system characteristics operationally possible, there seem to be no technological barriers that would negate the concept. The task appears to be much more one of systems engineering than one of advanced development. To protect covert and classified capabilities, NASA might offer a logical instrumentality for the technical and operational aspects of the system, with ACDA providing interpretation. These agencies would, of course, work in concert with and under the policy guidance of other appropriate government departments and agencies.

25X1

TOP SECRET

SENDER WILL CHECK CLASSIFICATION TOP AND BOTTOM			
	UNCLASSIFIED	CONFIDENTIAL	SECRET
<b>OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP</b>			
TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1	DDS&T		
2			
3			STAT
4			
5			
6			
	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DIRECT REPLY</b>	<b>PREPARE REPLY</b>
	<b>APPROVAL</b>	<b>DISPATCH</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
	<b>COMMENT</b>	<b>FILE</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>INFORMATION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
<p><b>Remarks:</b> Attached is a proposal from the NASA Administrator suggesting joint US-Soviet use of a satellite reconnaissance system to verify any arms limitation treaty. The NSSM 28 Steering Committee considered this on 14 May and did not find it a particularly good idea. It has been remanded to U. Alexis Johnson as Chairman of the NSAM 156 Committee for further consideration.</p> <p>We are advising the Director of this and suggesting he in turn advise Paine. Unless you hear from us further, this copy is for your information only.</p>			
<b>FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER</b>			
<b>FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.</b>		<b>DATE</b>	
R. J. Smith 7E44		STAT	
	UNCLASSIFIED	CONFIDENTIAL	SECRET